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 a stage formed at least at a portion of an external circumference of the optical filter by varying a size of a surface of said first filter layer along a direction perpendicular to the optical axis from a size of a surface of said second filter layer along the direction perpendicular to the optical axis, wherein the portion of the external circumference of the optical filter which forms the stage includes a portion of one of the surfaces of the first and second filter layers that extends in the direction perpendicular to the optical axis; and
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 the stage having a size that is sufficiently large so that the stage is capable of being utilized to hold the optical filter.

13. (Amended) An optical device comprising:

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 a photoelectric converter that converts a subject image formed at a light-receiving surface thereof to an electric signal;

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 an optical system that forms the subject image with a light flux from a subject at the light-receiving surface of said photoelectric converter;

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 an optical filter that is provided on an optical path between said photoelectric converter and said optical system to filter the light flux, the optical filter includes a plurality of filter layers that are laminated along a direction of an optical axis of the light flux that passes through the optical filter, the plurality of filter layers including at least a first filter layer and a second filter layer which are laminated with each other, a size of said first filter layer being smaller than a size of said second filter layer along at least one direction perpendicular to the optical axis so that a stepped portion is formed at least at a portion of an external circumference of the optical filter, the stepped portion having a size that is sufficiently large so that the stepped portion is capable of being utilized to hold the optical filter; and

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a holding member that engages a portion of an external circumference of the second filter layer that extends in the direction perpendicular to the optical axis and is located in the stepped portion, so that the holding member holds the optical filter.

REMARKS

Claims 2, 7, 8, 10 and 12-19 are pending. By this Amendment, independent claims 2 and 13 are amended, and claim 3 is canceled. The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

The independent claims are amended to even more clearly distinguish them over the applied references. Dependent claim 3 is canceled because it is now redundant to what is recited in its independent claim 2.

Claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 10 and 12-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,069,651 to Tsuyuki et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,078,442 to Tada et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action relies upon Tada et al. as allegedly teaching the stage of independent claim 2 and the stepped portion of independent claim 13. Independent claim 2 has been amended to even more clearly state that the stage has a size that is sufficiently large so that the stage is capable of being utilized to hold the optical filter. Independent claim 13 has been amended to even more clearly state that the stepped portion has a size that is sufficiently large so that the stepped portion is capable of being utilized to hold the optical filter. It is further noted that independent claim 13 already recites that a holding member engages a portion of an external circumference of the second filter layer...located in the stepped portion, so that the holding member holds the optical filter. Applicant respectfully submits that Tada et al. does not disclose or suggest the claim 2 stage or the claim 13 stepped portion, and that the claimed combinations of features are not disclosed or suggested from the combination of Tsuyuki et al. and Tada et al.